The Quiet Corner

THE ARTS, DINING, ANTIQUES, ATTRACTIONS & SO MUCH MORE...

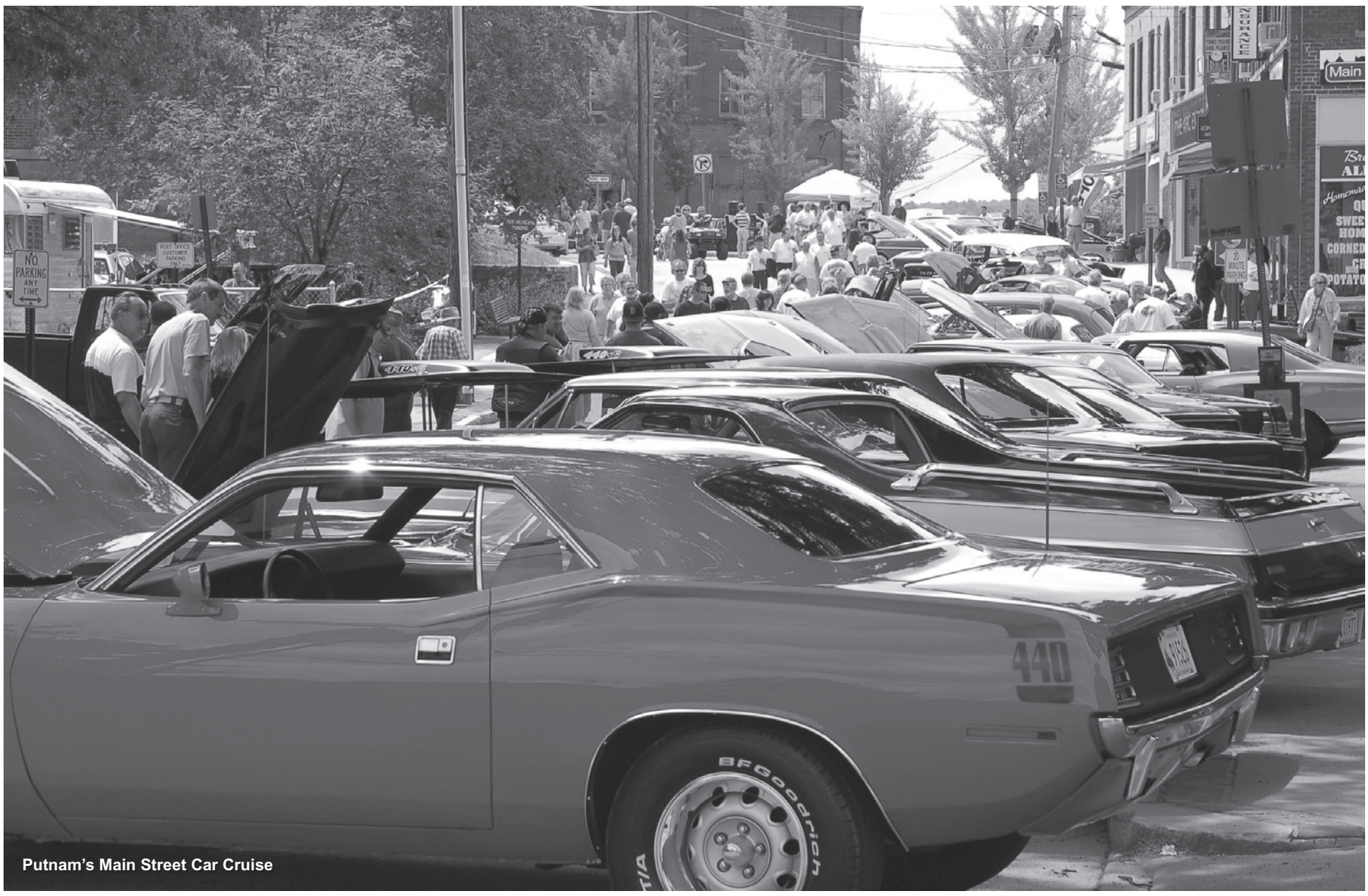
PUTNAM TRAVELER

Supporting Tourism & Communities in Northeastern, CT & Beyond...

ISSUE NO. 35 • NORTHEASTERN, CONNECTICUT

DOWNTOWN MAP INSIDE • JULY - SEPTEMBER 2012

For an afternoon, a day, or a weekend...come and enjoy Northeastern Connecticut!



Putnam's Main Street Car Cruise

Summer is a season for celebration...and we know how to celebrate in northeastern Connecticut! Events not to be missed include: First Fridays, downtown Putnam, a celebration of the arts the first Friday of every month. Fourth of July Fireworks, Riverfires, rubber duck races, a Cirquetacular al Fresco, and more at Rotary Park in Putnam. The Main Street Car Cruise, in downtown Putnam, is a popular summertime event. Celebrating Agriculture, the Brooklyn Fair and the Woodstock Fair provide agricultural education and fun for the whole family. Fort Hill Farms, in Thompson, features Lavender Summer Garden Tours, Blueberry & Bluegrass Festival, and a corn maze that opens in August! Artists in the Country, in Woodstock, will hold their 12th Annual Show & Sale in September. Not to mention great dining, shopping, hiking, biking, greenhouses, wineries, and so much more. Why go anywhere else?

INSIDE:

A calendar of events...Local Advertisers...Local Real Estate... Discover Putnam Seasonal Events...this issue features ***Wagon Road Greenhouse***... Lucky for us...Owners, Frank and Donna Anastasio followed their dreams to northeastern Connecticut and became founding members of the Northeast CT Farmers Market...***Rock Solid Solutions***...a stone fabrication and construction business located in Plainfield, CT...Owner Jeffrey Joslyn provides high quality stonework for customers who appreciate the artistry of natural stone walls, patios, and stone design.

Fort Hill Farms

Check out ***The Stomping Ground***...Putnam's newest establishment featuring food, beer (plus a full bar), and live entertainment, complimented by friendly owners and a fun atmosphere...Looking for a better way to market your adventure gear & services? ***Xtreme Mobile Adventures*** is a unique marketing platform that serves as a rolling billboard plus onsite marketing... Find out why ***Fort Hill Farms*** is an award-winning success story for the Quiet Corner...the ***Weekend Planner*** offers ideas for places to stay, dine and be entertained...plus a summertime ***crossword puzzle***!

Downtown Putnam & Area Maps • Businesses • Local Activities • Shopping & Calendar of Events

Northeastern Connecticut is Forty-Five Minutes from Casinos, Hartford, & Providence
Twenty Minutes from Worcester • One Hour from Boston • Three Hours from New York City

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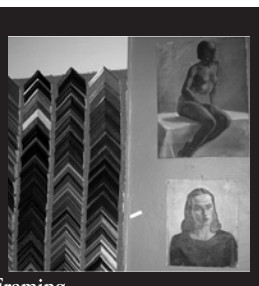
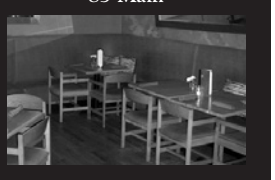


Arts & Framing

85 Main



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Sat, July 14 – Cirquetacular al Fresco, 7pm, Rotary Park
Sun, Nov 25 – Holiday Dazzle Light Parade, 5pm, Downtown Putnam
Sat, July 14, Aug 11, Sept 8 – River Fire, @ dark, Rotary Park
Sun, Aug 12 – Main Street Car Cruise, ARC Duck Race
Sat, Oct 20 – Great Pumpkin Fest, 10 to 4, Downtown Putnam

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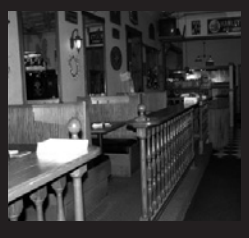
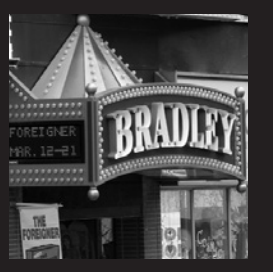
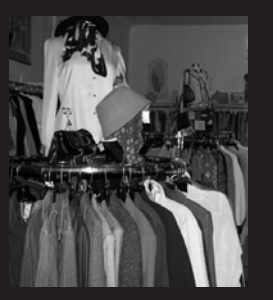
Wonderland Books





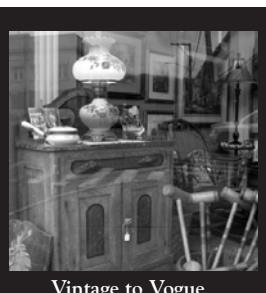
Main St. Grille

Panache

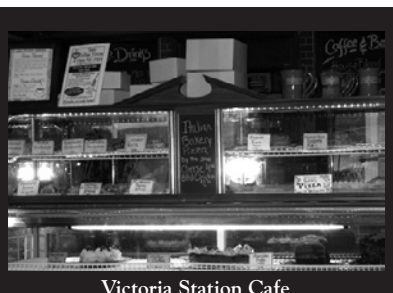


Silver Circle Studio

Sawmill Pottery

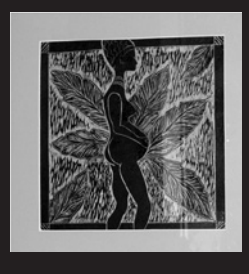


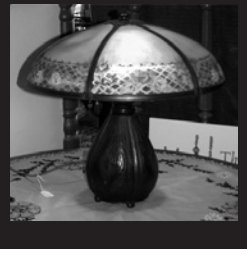
Vintage to Vogue



Victoria Station Cafe

The Arc Gift Shop





Wagon Road Greenhouse

Frank and Donna Anastasio followed their dreams to northeastern Connecticut. They were high school sweethearts in urban New Haven/East Haven, but both had deep roots in farming. Fortunately for our region, they took advantage of a job opening for Frank and in 1979 moved to Brooklyn. They became successful transplants as the owners of Wagon Road Greenhouse in South Killingly and one of the founding members of the Northeast CT Farmers Market.

BY NANCY WEISS

Frank learned the joy of growing one's own food under the loving eye of his grandfather, who cultivated every inch of his backyard in New Haven.

"My grandparents grew everything from chickens to vegetables to grapevines. I loved stomping the grapes with my bare feet as a boy in their basement," said Anastasio with a smile.

"When you grow up in that atmosphere, it sticks with you," he added.

among other crops. Their daughters, in 3rd and fourth grade, enjoyed working along side their parents.

Soon Frank was eager to expand his operation. He leased small plots of land from neighbors in Brooklyn, eventually farming on a total of 13 acres. He bought a tractor and plunged into market gardening.

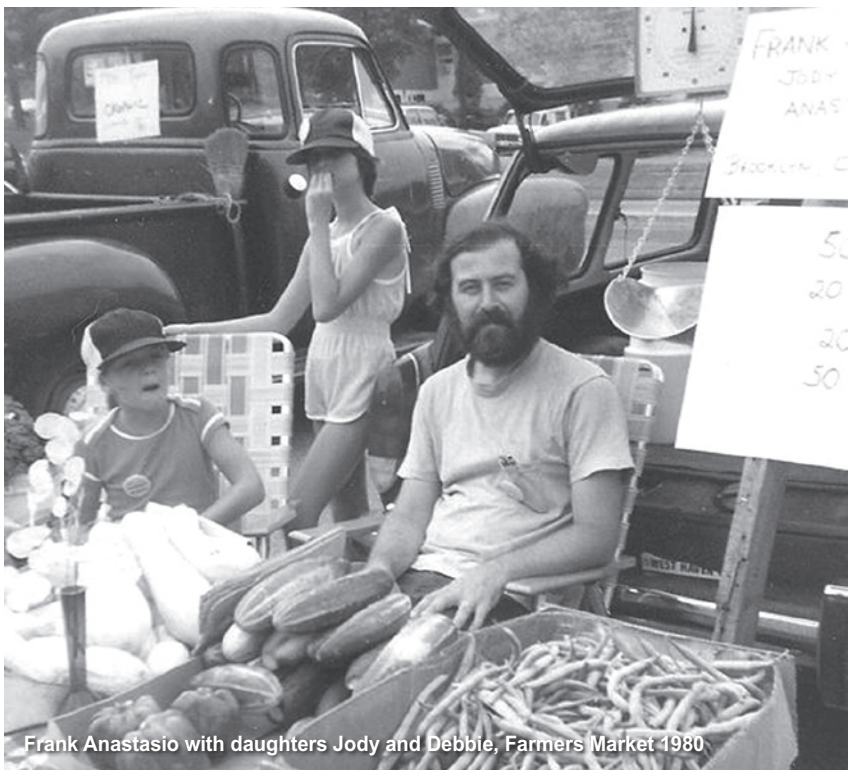
This year the Farmers Market will celebrate its 33rd year of operation. Don Francis' idea took root with the help of leadership from Frank and Donna Anastasio and several other local families and farmers.

wonderful," said Donna, pausing to share a whiff of a mint leaf as she spoke.

The Farmers Market appealed to the Anastasio's because it links growers and consumers. The interchange between them led to many friendships. Frank noted that he now sees a number of parents bringing their children who first visited his market stall when they were youngsters.

Frank enjoys knowing that young people are interested in continuing the legacy he and others began at the Farmers Market.

"What's really exciting now is that I see kids in Ag-Ed getting involved. For example, I am working with Katie Molodich, a Killingly Ag-Ed graduate this year who will be attending Uconn soon, and a Farmers Market member with her family. Donna and I have decided to stop growing mums (to spend more time with our grandkids), and Katie is going to be doing that now for several of our long standing mum customers. She and



Frank Anastasio with daughters Jody and Debbie, Farmers Market 1980

Frank and Donna Anastasio

Anastasio, with degrees from both Fairfield and Georgetown Universities, joined United Services as part of the Community Mental Health Center. He developed a local television show, set up programs for widowed persons and worked with children in emergency situations. All the while, he and Donna were establishing gardens on the 1 1/2 acre lot they lived on in Brooklyn.

Cooperative Extension Agent Don Francis, who thought the area could use a Farmers Market, began organizing prospective Market members. Francis was correct in his assessment. In the first year of the Market, 23 vendors participated. Frank and Donna started selling tomatoes, vegetable plants, cabbage, and beans

Farming was a second career for Frank and Donna for many years. Frank continued to work for United Services and Donna, who attended Quinebaug Valley Community College, Eastern Connecticut State University and Rhode Island College, became a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. She worked at a number of area health care and social service agencies while working at the greenhouses on weekends. While she loved her career, Donna also enjoyed farming.

"My father was a farmer from North Carolina. We always had a garden. I grew up with it. Two years ago I was able to start working here full time. It all just evolved. I love putting together the patio pots and the hanging containers. Working with the herbs is

I also work together on posting information about the Farmers Market on Facebook," Anastasio said.

True to his professional calling as a community organizer, Anastasio enjoys the outreach aspects of the Farmers Market. He believes that without the market most small growers would have gone out of business. He also works hard to find ways for farming to become more feasible for newcomers to the field. He is active in the Killingly Agvocate Committee.

Frank knows the juggling act a small farmer needs to manage to survive. For many years he would rise early to deliver sweet corn in the morning, go to his office, run home at lunchtime to check on his greenhouses and then work into the night when necessary.

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In 1989 the Anastasio family moved to their current location on Wagon Road in South Killingly. They built greenhouses and facilities to serve the public. They were open on weekends until 1999 when Frank was able to become a full-time farmer, something Frank describes as "a joy."

Frank couldn't resist planting a few grapevines to resurrect his experiences as a child on his grandfather's urban oasis. At first he made wine using California grapes, but over time, he has established a vineyard on the property. Area vineyardists and winemakers have helped him to learn the skill of growing grapes and winemaking. Currently he grows 7 different varieties of grapes to make wine. He is currently researching what it would take to become a licensed winery, but no decisions have been made just yet. "Right now we just are enjoying what we are doing," he says.

Frank and Donna Anastasio grew up with farming in their blood. They added their professional skills as community organizers to the mix and helped develop the Farmers Markets that offer fresh produce to consumers. Now they foster new farmers as they continue to offer plants and vegetables at their Wagon Road location and at area Farmers Markets.

At a future date, Frank and Donna will lift a glass of wine made from their own grapes and toast the chain of circumstances that led them to northeastern Connecticut. The move was a good one for them and for everyone fortunate enough to shop at the Farmers Markets in our region.

ROCK SOLID SOLUTIONS

"My father ran a stone quarry in Sterling for the last thirty years so I kind of grew up around stone," says Jeffrey Joslyn, owner of Rock Solid Solutions, a stone fabrication and construction business located in Plainfield, CT. "When I went to college I started picking up odd jobs doing stone work to help pay for college and pay the bills. When I got out of school I kept doing side work. Then six years ago I decided to start doing it full time."

BY CRIS CADIZ

Joslyn went to school for criminal justice, intending to become a state trooper but instead he found his calling working with his hands, making stone shape beautiful walls, fireplaces, walkways and more. "I enjoy it and I think you need to enjoy it because it's labor intensive and time consuming. I like doing it. The day goes by pretty quick when I'm out there working."

When Joslyn got out of school he started working with his father as well as part-time for a stone fabrication company in Sudbury, MA. Precourt & Son Architectural Stone produces stone fabrication work such as swimming pool coping, mantels and hearths...basically anything that can be made out of stone. "It allowed me to work on a lot of high end projects and I learned a lot," says Joslyn. "They are a talented group of people over there. They get stone from all over the country and all over the world and fabricate it, cut it and grind it. It's just like woodworking but you're doing it with stone."

Joslyn learned to carve stone and found it inspiring. "I got into carving bird baths and stone planters. I like to take natural stones, ones I find in the woods or someplace, and make a bird bath out of it so that it

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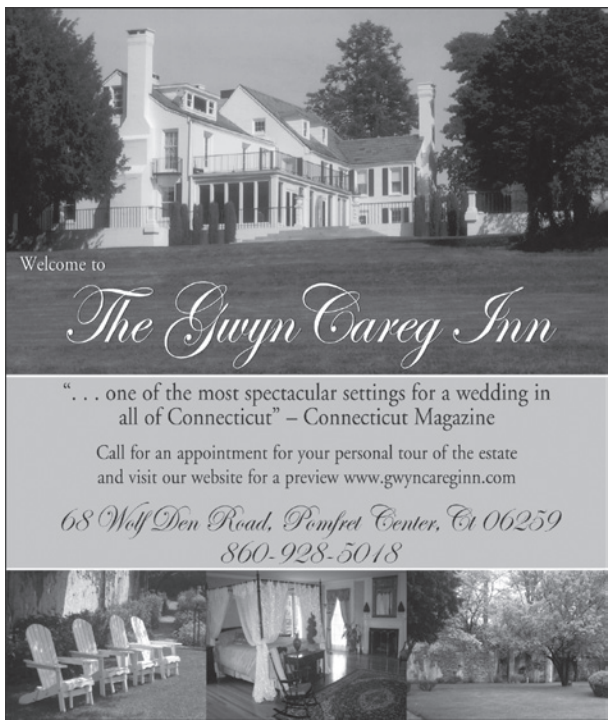

looks natural even though it's been tooled with stone tools. It takes up to eight hours to make one of those pieces so I kind of just whittle away at it." He calls this part of his stone work "more of a hobby" but you can find Joslyn selling these signature pieces at artisan and craft fairs, such as the annual Artists in the Country shows in Woodstock. Joslyn would like to do more shows but usually finds himself too busy with his work.

Joslyn respects the artistry of working with stone. "I like to be selective. I don't want to just go slap a wall together. I'd rather go work for somebody who can appreciate the art than somebody who just wants a bank held back or something. Stone is a beautiful, natural product and when you start working with it I believe it's very much an art form. Whatever I try to do I focus on quality and craftsmanship first. It's seemed to work so far and people seem to appreciate it."

If he could choose a discipline within the art of stonework, Joslyn would just build walls. "I love building stone walls with natural stone from all over New England. I like to mix it up so it's different colors and shapes and sizes." His technique focuses on letting the inherent beauty of the stone he's working with shine. "There's no such thing as a bad stone. I can work with almost anything. I try to make all my walls what I call a dry laid wall. So there might be mortar or some adhesive in my masonry work but I want to make it a natural organic look." Joslyn sources his stone from all over, including farmers, construction sites, and more. "I buy it from all over New England depending on what I'm looking for. I've gone all the way up to New Hampshire to get stone."

Joslyn enjoys getting free reign on projects. "I like when people call me up and say they need to do something with this area or this fireplace can you give me some ideas, because then I get to do what I want. Sometimes people are pretty specific... but I still try to talk them into what I want to do," he laughs.

One unique project that stands out in his mind was a request to make a staddle stone. "People look at my website and they're like, what's the deal with the mushroom? and I have to explain it," says Joslyn, who enjoyed the research he had to do and the history behind this unusual stone carving. "This was a cool project even though it was a small one. A lady wanted me to make what she called a staddle stone, which were used to support grain houses so the mice couldn't get up in them. They look like a mushroom. I had to carve it from scratch from limestone and make it look like all these pictures she gave me from Ireland."

So far Joslyn's business has all come by word of mouth—a testament to his talent and skill. "I started for just friends and family... now once I get a job done I get a phone call from somebody telling me I heard about you from a friend of a friend." Joslyn would love to work mostly within the Quiet Corner, but he will travel up to an hour or two away for jobs. "It's great that it's kind of like a hobby that I enjoy doing but I'm also getting paid for it... so it's the best of both worlds."

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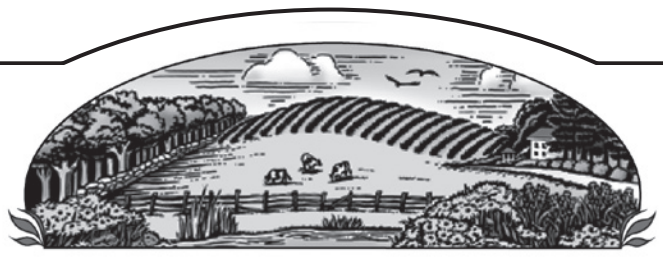

FORT HILL FARMS

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THE STOMPING GROUND

As a small business owner in town, I'm always excited to hear about establishments opening locally. But the news of a new eatery had especially piqued my interest. Rumor had it that there would be a music venue touting live performances 5 nights a week. Now, THAT was intriguing.

BY DOT BURNWORTH

With my pottery studio right around the corner from this new venue on Main St, I wanted to round up support for this fledgling business. Their soft opening was scheduled for Wednesday, June 6, and I worried that perhaps it might be a little quiet on that first night. So, as a good neighbor, after pottery class was over, I convinced a bunch of my students to head up there with me. "You don't have to stay long," I coaxed. "Let's just go to check it out and show our support for a few minutes."

As we walked into The Stomping Ground, we knew immediately: the so-called "soft" opening was anything but. As we made our way through the crowd towards the back of the narrow room, we saw plenty of familiar faces and greeted friends. Cliché perhaps, but it felt a bit like the scene at Cheers. You know—"where everybody knows your name." It felt instantly warm and inviting. The energy from the patrons was palpable, and we felt immediately at home. The plan to stay for just a few minutes crumbled. We stayed until they were ready to close, enjoying great music, food and drink.

Terry and Sarah Paquette

Though thoroughly exhausted, the owners, Terry and Sarah Paquette, were glowing. They were overwhelmed with a feeling of being supported and welcomed by the community. Despite their busy schedule, they welcomed me in to chat, giving me the sense that they had plenty of time to sit and relax, even though I knew they were in the midst of a mountainous chore list, including ordering food, meeting with bands, putting finishing touches on the building and fixtures, and (did I mention?) hanging the 25 foot long dragon that lords over patrons from her place on the ceiling.

Married 8 years ago this July, Terry and Sarah share a love of art and music. Terry is an amateur musician, playing bass, guitar, ukulele, and melodica, while Sarah is well versed in the visual arts. Their complementary skills and interests are translating easily into their blended roles at The Stomping Ground. Terry is booking bands while Sarah is connecting with visual artists whose work covers the walls (and ceiling). Their generous, energetic spirits and welcoming natures are evident at The Stomping Ground. It is that feeling that was so palpable when we walked though the door on opening night.

As quickly as it seemed that The Stomping Ground opened, this isn't an idea that started overnight. 4 years ago, a friend of theirs was looking for a venue in which to play music in between gigs in Pittsburgh and Boston. Terry and Sarah didn't have access to any public spaces, but they freely offered up their living room in Union, CT, and hosted a little pot-luck dinner party for their friend. It was a big hit. They were hooked. Terry and Sarah believed that there was a musical subculture in this area that was dying to break out.

Over the next few years, they continued to host similar parties that became more and more popular. They considered converting an old barn on their property into a performance space. The problem was that they lived "all the way" out in Union. That didn't seem to be a viable option. Yet, the couple felt drawn to this idea of opening a place where local and regional bands could be heard. Part music aficionados, part community activists, they love the idea of bringing people together through music. Clearly, they needed space.

Finding themselves in the classic predicament of so many artists, the pair was spending 40 hours a week each in jobs that offered little to no creative outlets. They yearned to follow their passion, but it would take the perfect location and a big leap of faith.

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Finally, in late 2011, they heard rumors that Putnam's wine bar, Pangaea, was going to be closing. They had enjoyed music at the bar in the past, and knew that the acoustics were fantastic. They approached the owner about buying her out, and her response was, "Make me an offer." They quickly came to an agreement, and the Paquettes were in business.

Over the next few months, they worked on solidifying their concept, planning their menu, and contacting musicians of all types. They want to promote freedom of expression. "We like weird stuff," said Terry, to which Sarah added, "We enjoy the strange and unusual." Determined not to be pigeon-holed into one musical genre, they're working hard to find a mix of styles with both local and outside influences. They're not tied to traditional musical performances either, citing plans to offer spoken word performances, poetry slams, possibly even comedy nights.

Sitting with the pair, I was struck with how connected and in-sync they seemed. As I asked them questions, their answers wove together with a harmonized beauty. They completed one another's sentences, clearly and thoroughly understanding one another. This connectedness made them so easy to talk to and be around, and it was that same sense of ease, comfort and effortlessness that I felt in the relaxed vibe of The Stomping Ground. This is undoubtedly a fusion of likeminded souls.

One area on which they definitely agree is in the kitchen. They feel strongly that good food should be sourced locally and doesn't have to break the bank. To this end, they are using as much regionally grown food as possible. Terry explains his connection to local agriculture, reminiscing about working for Woodstock Farms as young as 14 years old. They want to support local farms, recognizing them as a big part of the character of Connecticut.

Local shouldn't mean pricey, which is why nothing on their current menu of regular items costs more than $12. For those that might associate economical cuisine with a lack of quality, I can assure you that The Stomping Ground will prove otherwise. I had the good fortune of tasting several menu items within their first few days, and each was more delicious than the last. They're clearly going for eclectic, both on stage and in the kitchen, offering 8 varieties of gourmet grilled cheese, a lineup of non-traditional burritos, as well as pot pies, soups, and salads. Not to be forgotten at the bottom of the menu: two mouth-watering inducing desserts, including the baked bacon brownie.

For thirsty patrons, The Stomping Ground will also offer variety and eccentricity behind the bar. They have 10 beers on tap, with a focus on American Craft and Microbrews. There are several attention-grabbing options, including the Banana Bread Beer. Naturally, they also offer a full bar and a wide-ranging wine list.

If their first week in business is any indication, The Stomping Ground will be a bustling, welcome addition to the Putnam landscape. Nichola Johnson, owner of the Complex Performing Arts Center was spotted there on Sunday night. She raved, "The Stomping Ground is a great compliment to the artistic nature of Putnam." Supportive comments from some of their (already 614) Facebook friends included, "Almost the whole staff from Devon Point Farm has been to The Stomping Ground now. Love this place. Good beer, great atmosphere, and really nice owners. Officially our "go-to" bar!" Shaun Rock, a local musician who performed on the second night, said, "Seth and I thoroughly enjoyed playing at The Stomping Ground last night. Great people, great vibe!" These happy new business owners have truly found their niche.

The Stomping Ground is located at 132 Main St. in Putnam. They are open with regular hours and live music 5 nights a week: Wednesday through Sunday. Learn more at https://www.facebook.com/PutnamStompGround

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Carl Reidemeister has a passion for marketing. He has taken a longtime dream of his own, married it with a unique advertising platform and offered it as an inexpensive and intriguing way of getting the word out about his sponsors. "It's as nontraditional as social media was or some of these other advertising online things were 10 years ago," says Reidemeister.

BY CRIS CADIZ

Reidemeister started Xtreme Mobile Adventures in 2011 after years of enjoying a sport called overlanding, which combines two of America's favorite pastimes: motorized vehicles and exploring. Xtreme Mobile Adventures (XMA) is–in its most basic sense–a rolling billboard. The billboard happens to be a souped-up 4WD van called a Sportsmobile, which is loaded with equipment that allows its passengers to head into the wild to camp out and explore terrain no regular vehicle could handle. "The whole overland scene, vehicle exploration, is a huge market on the West Coast," explains Reidemeister. "Since there's so much public land available for people to drive on, lot of people out west will take either a 4 wheel drive vehicle with a tent or a trailer or they'll have something like I've got. They'll travel, camp and explore places you might not normally go in a 2-wheel drive vehicle."

Reidemeister has enjoyed overlanding for years. On a trip to California, he visited the Fresno-based Sportsmobile West company and fell in love with their high-end, all-terrain recreational vehicles. Since Sportsmobile didn't have any presence on the East Coast, Reidemeister explored the idea of becoming a representative–blending his 26 years of sales and marketing experience with his love for the sport of off-road vehicle exploration.

The XMA Sportsmobile is an attraction in its own right. This impressive 4WD van can sleep four and is equipped with an electric roof, solar power, a diesel furnace, a refrigerator, an outdoor shower and much more. "I get attention no matter where I go with the van," says Reidemeister. "What happens is people snap pictures of it, they go on the website, they see it. And if I'm out driving anywhere I often get stopped and people ask me what is it that you do?"

Reidemeister's plans for his new van didn't end with representing Sportsmobile. He saw a niche he could fill by attracting overlanding and adventure sports sponsors to advertise on the sides of the Sportsmobile. In addition, he travels with the van to expos, shows and events along the east coast where he demonstrates the sponsor companies' products.

"It started with representing the company OEX (Overland Experts) on the East Coast and then I thought why not represent these other companies that could benefit from the van and it kind of just grew from there," says Reidemeister. "Once I had my first two or three sponsors it mushroomed into a bigger thing. The cost to do what we are talking about is very inexpensive for each sponsor–extremely low when compared to traditional advertising."

Reidemeister says the best way to describe XMA is as "...an advertising concept broken into passive mobile ad platform and an active component with visits at other locations. The company is competing for normal passive advertising dollars, like magazine ads, or they may be sending people to attend different functions or events. This covers both and allows them to get to events that they may not normally attend."

The Sportsmobile carries sponsor companies' products and literature to display and demo. "I have every company's products unless they are a service, for example, Overland Experts–they are a training company so all I have is information and my knowledge on it. But in the case of Superwinch, for example, the van has a brand new winch. I have an onboard welder by Premier Power Welder, which I just added that is custom built into the rear bumper by another local CT company, All Pro Automotive in Old Lyme. If you are out in the middle of nowhere and you break a leaf spring or you break a part, I can weld anywhere from 25 feet away. I can run power equipment and power tools like a grinder. They are all the products you would want to use if you were to travel and go overlanding."

Superwinch, a forty-year-old company based in Dayville, CT, is one of XMA's newest sponsors. They manufacture high performing winches for everything from industrial use to trailers, ATVs and, of course, off road vehicles. Reidemeister's Sportsmobile has

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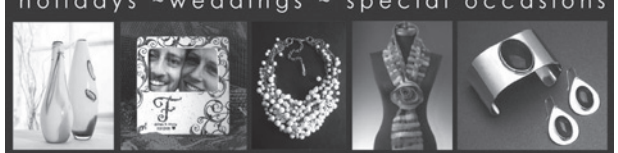

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a Talon 12.5 SR unit on its front bumper, the same winch Superwinch supplies to US armed forces for vehicle recovery. "Superwinch chose to work with XMA because of their no-pressure, no sales-tainted presentation," explains Product Marketing Manager Jon Mason. "Consumers are bombarded with marketing messages, sales tactics and noise; XMA's approach flies in the opposite direction: a quiet afternoon chat with a man who is passionate about the products on his van. Word of mouth has always been an asset for Superwinch and we believe XMA will further our effort."

with economy...yet these sponsor companies are able to 'leverage' the relationships between themselves using tools like social media due to the fact they don't compete, but rather benefit from each other. XMA helps bring this together."

"For anyone who's done a trade show of any kind, they know it's a lot of work," says Reidemeister. "So for me to charge a sponsor $50 or $100 is amazing. It gives them the power of 15-20 sponsors collectively paying a small fee to get that exposure when they wouldn't spend $2,000 on their own."

Experts, Superwinch, and Ashlawn Farm Coffee, plus MasterPull, Hi-Lift, Cobb, Ditch-Hitch, Sportsmobile, Pull-Pal, Load Tamer, Premier Power Welder, Titan Gun Safe, United Four Wheel Drive Association, Zamp Solar, Star Lights, Amsoil and Maxtrax. XMA is proud to donate a portion of all proceeds to the Wounded Warrior project.

For more information visit www.XtremeMobileAdventures.com.

"I've known Carl for a long time and I think we were his first sponsor," says Elfström. "The concept is great; it's tough for small businesses like mine and others to go to every one of these shows and get exposure in places that really might not be worth the capital expenditure for the product you get. So having him go there without having sponsors that we are competitive with ... made perfect sense."

Based in East Haddam, CT, Overland Experts (OEX) is a training company that teaches off-road and four-wheel-drive skills and overland logistics to professional, military and recreational drivers. Overland Experts was founded in 1998 by Bruce Elfström, an explorer and a former biologist, who now trains Navy Seals, Army Rangers and utility companies, among others, how to drive off-road, how to recover vehicles that get stuck, how to fix vehicles that break and how to cross borders without getting shot. Elfström also leads adventure travel expeditions all over the world. "You can join me in Iceland, Mongolia, Bolivia for two or three weeks using a vehicle as a modern camel," he invites.

Like Elfström, Reidemeister recognizes the value to his sponsors of XMA's cooperative marketing strategy. "You have diverse companies, all with their own agenda, coming together and finding the benefit of each other. We live in a world of everyone being out for themselves...large corporations, people with their own issues, problems

Reidemeister plans to attend a number of events and expos this year with the XMA Sportsmobile. Some are specific to the industry, and others are places to be seen, such as the America's Cup sailboat races in Newport, RI. "I've got true events that I go to where I rent a booth, and then there are visits, where, say, if I go to America's Cup in downtown Newport with the van, 10 to 20,000 people might walk by us. At shows, the vehicle is really the booth. I have all the stuff out on display and available for discussion. So people would walk up to the van and I'd say 'Hey, what do you think of my wife's condo?' And just strike up some conversation. If people can touch and feel and learn about something then they can appreciate why they might want it. Usually it's an educational process and that's what you don't get in a passive advertisement."

Xtreme Mobile Adventures will be at Opsail 2012 at Fort Trumbull on July 7, in York, PA, for a jeep event on July21st and rallies in Georgia and Vermont this fall. XMA's current sponsors read like a "who's who" of great companies and include **Connecticut-based Overland**

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Fort Hill Farms

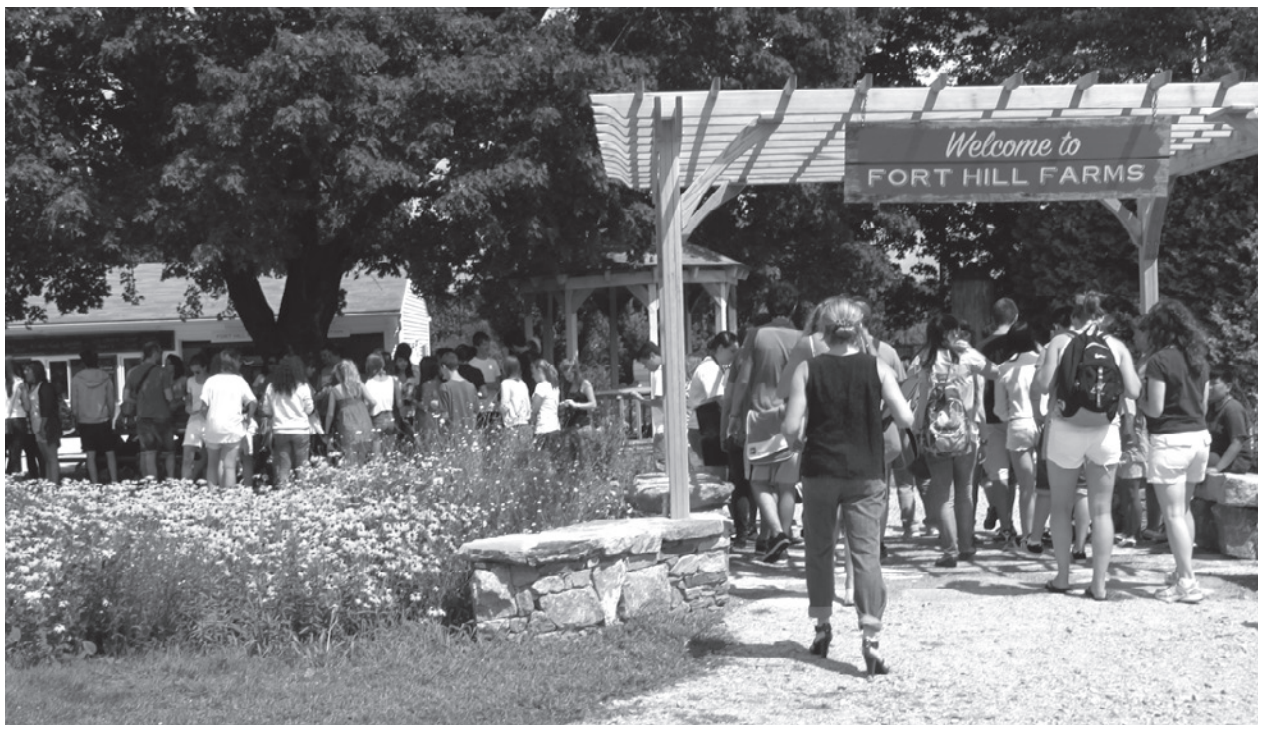
Kristin Orr calls herself and her family "Farmers for the New Millennium." If that means having ingenuity, willingness to diversify, resilience, creativity and hospitality, she hit the nail on the head. The Orrs have used these qualities plus lots of good old fashioned hard work to make their thousand-acre farm an award-winning success story for the Quiet Corner.

BY CRIS CADIZ

"What puts us on the map?" asked Kristin, of her peaceful little town of Thompson. "Nothing but the Speedway." And–apparently–Fort Hill Farms, which has garnered accolades from Yankee Magazine, drawing folks from as far as New Haven and Guilford just to visit the farm in northeastern CT. Voted the Editor's Choice "Best of New England" for 2012, this popular regional magazine hailed Fort Hill Farms as the "Best Place To Go Nowhere." The Farm was also noted in Emily Brooks' 2011 illustrated cookbook "Connecticut Farmer and Feast," which prompted a New Milford man to drive all the way to Thompson to have Kristin sign his book. He declared she was the most interesting farmer in the book of fifty profiles.

In addition, Fort Hill Farms and The Farmers Cow was recently announced winner of the "CT Tourism Ambassador" award in the state tourism industry's "Pineapple Awards." "This is the first time a farm has won this award and recognizes the contributions Fort Hill Farms has made," says Kristin's husband Peter Orr. "This is a major accomplishment for our farm and The Farmers Cow for being recognized as important contributors to the Connecticut Tourism industry. Our farm hosts tens of thousands of visitors each year, by which the people learn about local agriculture and have fun while doing it as well as enjoy our fresh farm products."

The Orrs are traditional farmers, who milk the cows and work the fields, but who also welcome visitors to come see what they are doing, to participate and partake of the bounty they produce right there on the farm. At Fort Hill Farms, they are always dreaming of new ways to invite visitors, such as giving away free ice cream cones to dads on Father's Day. The farm includes lots of land and cows, of course, but also 70 perennial gardens, pick-your-own patches, a corn maze adventure, and a creamery with ice cream and other farm-fresh treats. From early spring through late fall, Fort Hill Farms schedules events and happenings that draw families from all over southern New England.



The Orr Family

The Orrs are constantly willing to try new things and don't let setbacks scare them away. "I lost 760 lavender plants trying to look like France out in the field in one fell swoop thirteen years ago. I realized this ain't southern France!" exclaims Kristin. After this devastating loss she got smart, tried again and planted them directly into stone for peak drainage in more sheltered gardens near an old barn foundation.

Lavender Summer is a celebration of fresh lavender in June, July and August. This includes pick-your-own lavender plus the Farm sells dried flowers and other products including lavender tea, lavender sugar and lavender ice cream. You can also take a free educational tour of the labyrinths with Kristin on weekends. The 1,500 lavender plants in three lavender labyrinths are one of the attractions noted by Yankee Magazine.

Farmer's Cow Ice Cream has been a huge success. The secret, suggests Kristin, is the freshness of the milk, which, unlike any other ice cream, does not travel out of the state to be processed. The Farmer's Cow is a cooperative of five Connecticut farms including Fort Hill Farms, which have teamed up to offer farm fresh products produced right here in the state. Farmer's Cow recently added coffee to their ever-growing list of products. "Everybody said, well, you have the cream where's the coffee?" said Kristin. "Because even if people don't drink milk they at least put it in your coffee... so we banded together with Fair Trade Alliance farmers in the equatorial countries and came up with 'a coffee worthy of our cream.'" Fort Hill Farms sells Farmer's Cow ice cream, milk and cream, coffee, eggs, cider and other seasonal beverages at their Creamery open daily Monday to Thursday 11am-7pm and Friday to Sunday 11am-9pm, starting in July, 11am-9pm daily.

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"In addition to our farm, The Farmer's Cow Farms host a series of farm tours throughout the season," explains Peter. "We will be celebrating National Ice Cream Day on July 15, 2012, with our Ice Cream, Blueberry, and Bluegrass Bash. We will be opening the Fort Hill Farms Corn Maze Adventure in early August for people to have fun and learn about local agriculture. In particular, the weekend Flashlight Nights have become very popular. The corn maze runs till November. Once fall begins, we are full of Fall Farmland Adventures. Pumpkin harvest is under way and we offer lots of activities during this time."

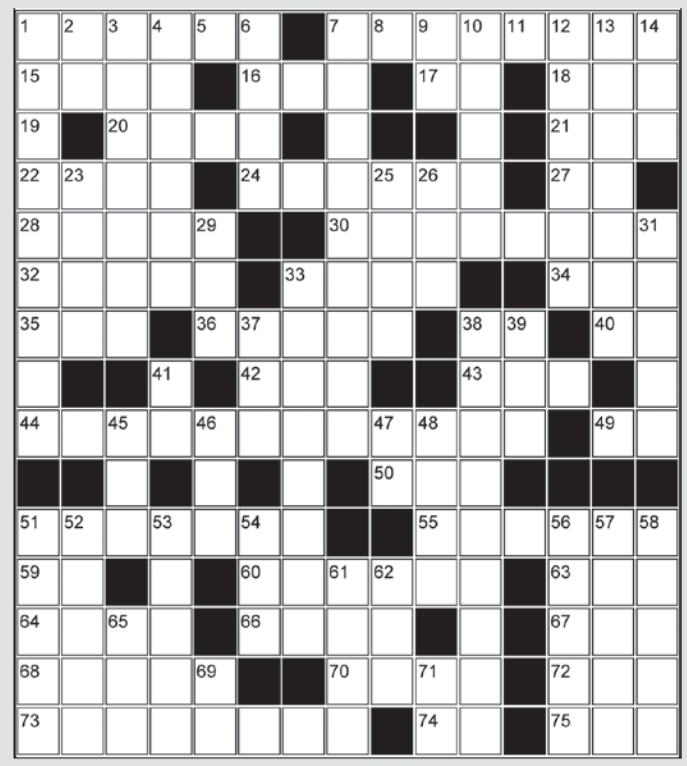
This year the corn maze pattern is a classroom with educational opportunities around every bend. The most fun is to do it during hot summer nights with a flashlight (BYOF!) and to enjoy ice cream when you come out.

Visiting Fort Hill Farms is a chance for people to enjoy the best of farm life–the beauty and serenity of nature, fresh air and fresh food–for a lovely if brief time.

Go to www.forthillfarms.com or find them on Facebook for more information and a schedule of events.

Summer in the Quiet Corner

by Burt Hansen *(answers can be found online at putnamtraveler.com)*



Across
1. Astonishment
7. You'll find a lot of these in Putnam
15. A cookie that's also a sandwich
16. An Australian bird
17. ___ & Mrs.
18. Adults love it, kids hate it
20. Start the poker game
21. It's tax-deferred
22. She's an explorer
24. ____ __ between Thailand and Vietnam (2 words)
27. Tissue (abbrev)
28. A Biblical hit
30. Well, that's not ____ ____ (2 words)
32. Forks usually have 3 or 4
33. Jill's fallen friend
34. Between mono and trio
35. An internet address
36. Not a falsehood
38. Between Do and Mi
40. On the __
42. A pub choice
43. Vex
44. A president behind the wheel?
49. Sandra __ (of Grey's Anatomy)
50. Not SSE
51. Mr. Vespucci
55. Almost a homer
59. What part of __ don't you understand?
60. ____ __ armor (2 words)
63. A very long time
64. A desert in China
66. ____ & leisure
67. First lady?
68. An African antelope
70. An area once French, now German
72. A period of sleep, or a band from Georgia
73. For many, the end of summer
74. Not you
75. An apology in txt

Down
1. A Quiet Corner town, or a comic strip bird
2. Either __
3. Getting closer
4. One way to support
6. Rod & ____
7. Not manual
9. Trademark
10. One way to be Celtic
12. What the states are
13. You may need two of these for 18 across
14. A short name for a short-stay location
23. An Arabian prince (variant)
25. __ as
26. Ick
29. After Daylight Saving Time ends here (abbrev)
31. The family pet
33. America's birthday
37. Totally awesome
38. Where flame and water do go together
39. Before, to a poet
41. A short dash
45. Before, on the bridal page
46. A major British music company (abbrev)
47. A higher degree than LPN
48. He's just not that ____ you
51. Not a demon
52. Dough
53. A large, thick skinned vegetarian that lives in Africa
54. Founded 100 years ago this year, and not for boys (abbrev)
56. A jury of one's ____
57. More than just a friend
58. Certainly not 57 down
61. It was an ____ bitsy teeney weeney yellow polka dot bikini
62. They make travel a pain, but for a reason (abbrev)
65. Might be a nick name for Barbara
69. The __ will see you now (abbrev)
71. Earlier than p.m.

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Calendar of Events

July

1st @ Dusk
Putnam Fireworks
Rotary Park, Putnam - Live entertainment with Cold Train @ 7:15pm to 9:15 pm; fireworks to follow.
www.winyradio.com

4th of July Jamboree
East Woodstock Congregational Church
Woodstock, CT
www.explorewoodstock.com

10-15th
Brimfield Antique Show
Brimfield, MA
The Brimfield Antiques Show is the largest outdoor antiques show in the world, with over 6,000 dealers. Some fields charge an admission fee others are FREE.
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14th @ 7:00 pm (rain date 7/15)
Cirquetacular al Fresco
Rotary Park, Putnam, CT
World renowned acrobats from New York performing incredible aerial stunts, combined with a ballet of strength while The Seven Hills Symphony Orchestra provides the musical backdrop for the amazing evening. Free to the public and presented by Town of Putnam with generous sponsorship from Wheelabrator Putnam, Inc. & Putnam Bank. **www.winyradio.com**

14th @ Dusk
River Fire
Rotary Park, Putnam, CT
Putnam's signature event, featuring wood bonfires illuminating the Quinebaug River accompanied by music provided by WINY Radio.
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19 & 21st 2-5pm
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www.celebrationsshoppes.com

21st
7th Annual Summer Celebration, 10am-5pm
Woodstock Fairgrounds, Woodstock, CT
Fun in the sun for all ages includes pony rides, moon-bounce, face painting, waterslide, antique car cruise, live music, burgers & dogs, icecream and more! Admission is free. **www.winyradio.com**

15th @ 1pm to 4pm
Ice Cream, Blueberry & Bluegrass Bash
Fort Hill Farms, Thompson, CT
Enjoy an afternoon celebration in recognition of National Ice Cream Month and the heart of Fort Hill's Blueberry season with complimentary sampling of the new 2012 The Farmers Cow Ice Cream Flavors and topped with grown on the farm blueberries all while listening to Live Bluegrass Music.
www.forthillfarms.com

BRADLEY

27 & 28 at 7:30 pm &
29th at 2pm
The Sound of Music
Bradley Playhouse, Putnam, CT
One of the great musicals of our time is the story of a widowed ex-naval officer with seven children, whose home is a place of order and discipline. That is until the arrival of postulant Frauline Maria. She teaches the Von Trapp children how to sing, sharing the magic of the sound of music. Musical: $21 for Adults • $18 for Students/Senior Citizens
www.thebradleyplayhouse.org

August

3, 4, 10 & 11 at 7:30 pm &
5th & 12th at 2pm
The Sound of Music
Bradley Playhouse, Putnam, CT
See July listing for description.
www.thebradleyplayhouse.org

11th
In the Summertime Event at
Fort Hill Farms
Thompson, CT
www.forthillfarms.com

11th beginning @ 6am
Annual Deary Memorial Road
Race and Walk
Starting at JD Coopers, Putnam, CT
Popular five-mile road race (9AM) & walk (6 & 8AM) to benefit the Deary Memorial Cancer Fund; 15 or 30-mile bike ride options (8AM). **www.winyradio.com**

11th @ Dusk
Riverfire
Rotary Park, Putnam, CT
www.winyradio.com

12th (rain date 8/19)
Putnam's Main Street Car Cruise
Downtown Putnam, CT
Custom & classic cars and motorcycles, prizes, raffles, food, music, vendors, entertainment and a burnout pit! Free for the whole family!
www.winyradio.com

12th @ 1:30pm
Arc Rubber Duck Race
Rotary Park, Putnam, CT
Rubber ducks compete in the Quinebaug River for prizes; benefits ARC of Quinebaug Valley. $5 per duck.
www.winyradio.com

16 & 18th 2-5pm
Incredible Edibles Tea
Celebrations Gallery & Gift Shop
Pomfret, CT
Infuse your summer with tastes from the gardens. $30 plus tax and gratuity.
Reservations required.
www.celebrationsshoppes.com

22-26th
The Brooklyn Fair
Brooklyn Fairgrounds, Brooklyn, CT
One of the nation's oldest agricultural fairs, voted 'Best Country Fair in New England,' by Yankee Magazine. Livestock exhibits, children's playland, tractor pulls, crafts, food, fireworks, and a full midway. Discounted tickets available online when purchased in advance. **www.brooklynfair.org**

31st through 9/3
Labor Day Weekend
151st Woodstock Fair
Woodstock Fairgrounds, Woodstock, CT
Animals barns, agricultural barn, antique corner, arts & crafts, horse shows, food and a full midway.
www.woodstockfair.com

September

4-9th
Brimfield Antique Show
Brimfield, MA
The Brimfield Antiques Show is the largest outdoor antiques show in the world, with over 6,000 dealers. Some fields charge an admission fee others are FREE.
www.brimfieldshow.com

8th @ 12pm
Family Day & Riverfire
Rotary Park, Putnam, CT
Chowder Fest, Live Entertainment and more!
Followed by River Fire at dusk.
www.winyradio.com

13 & 15th 2-5pm
Apple-of-My-Eye Tea
Celebrations Gallery & Gift Shop
Pomfret, CT
taste autumn delights at their peak of perfection.
$30 plus tax and gratuity.
Reservations required.
www.celebrationsshoppes.com

15th
Celebrate the Harvest at
Fort Hill Farms
Thompson, CT
www.forthillfarms.com

22nd, 9-3pm
Celebrating Agriculture
Woodstock Fairgrounds, Woodstock, CT
Hearty Breakfast (donation: adults $5, children under 10 just $3) Agricultural Displays, Events/Demonstrations, Egg Decorating Contest, Forestry Fair, Farm Equipment, Entertainment, Food, Farmer's Market, Hay Rides & Farm Tour, Children's Activities, Horses, Cows and More!

22 & 23rd (Sat. 10-5pm, Sun 11-4:30pm)
Artists in the Country Outdoor Show & Sale
52 County Road, Woodstock, CT
It's an ourdoor arts festival...celebration of the arts, and a fundraiser for children with Autism and other special needs - money for camp Quinebaug, Killingly, CT
www.artistsinthecountry.org

On Going Events

May through December
First Fridays
First Friday of every month @ 5pm
Downtown Putnam
Starting at 5PM, enjoy a variety of entertainment, specials from merchants & restaurants, art exhibitions, demonstrations and much more.
www.discoverputnam.org

Fort Hill Farms
Thompson, CT
Fort Hill Farms offers fun events throughout Spring, Summer & Fall. **www.forthillfarms.com**

Arts & Framing
Putnam, CT
Features art exhibits throughout the season.
www.artsandframingputnam.com

Connecticut Audubon Society -
Center at Pomfret
Pomfret, CT
Lots to See & Do
www.ctaudubon.org

Silver Circle Studio
Putnam, CT
Features local artwork and art exhibits throughout the season. Offers a range of workshops and art classes for all ages. **www.silvercirclestudio.com**

Sawmill Pottery
Putnam, CT
Features a gallery pottery and gifts, open-studio space, classes (for kids and adults) and workshops throughout the season. **www.sawmillpottery.com**

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Summer Weekend Planner

❖ **FRIDAY AFTERNOON CHECK IN:**
Check in at the Circa 1793 ***Hickory Hill Bed & Breakfast*** **(www.hickoryhillbandb.com)**, located in Pomfret Center in the heart of the Quiet Corner. Motorcycle enthusiasts, get on your bike and ride, with special tax-free summer packages available now through August 31. Hickory Hill Bed & Breakfast has been recommended by The Boston Globe!

❖ **FRIDAY NIGHT DINNER:**
Dine outdoors at the ***Vienna Restaurant*** **(www.thevienna.com)** in nearby Southbridge, Massachusetts. This summer, the Vienna is offering a Porch & Patio Pass, eat outside and take $20 off (per couple) for anything served outside *(see coupon in this issue of the Putnam Traveler.)* The Vienna serves Austro-Hungarian dishes with offerings of German and Bavarian, Swiss, French, classic steaks & seafood on the menu daily.

❖ **SATURDAY EVENING:**
Plan to visit the area for ***First Fridays*** **(www.discoverputnam.org).** This is a celebration of the arts held the first friday of each month in downtown Putnam.

❖ **SATURDAY MORNING:**
Main Street Grille, on Main Street in downtown Putnam, offers a huge breakfast menu with signature dishes including quiche, corned beef hash, sweet potato homefries, potato pancakes and crepes. The Eggs Benedict is our personal favorite. Main Street Grille has expanded and is open for breakfast, lunch and now for dinner on Friday and Saturday evenings.

❖ **SATURDAY MID-MORNING:**
Take a 2.5 mile hike at ***The Old Furnace State Park*** located in Killingly, CT. This blue-blazed trail offers a variety of habitats and land forms at the site of an 18th-century iron mill. Visitors can follow the trail through historic Old Furnace State Park, a beautiful hemlock grove, along a scenic stream and wetland. The trail then becomes more difficult as you continue to the summit of Ross' Cliffs for a panoramic view above Half Hill Pond. From atop Ross' Cliffs, leave the blue-blazed trail and walk down to the parking lot in Ross Pond State Park, following the trail around Half Hill Pond, and reconnect back with the blue-blazed trail to return to Old Furnace Park. For more information about local state parks & hikes visit **www.tlgv.org.**

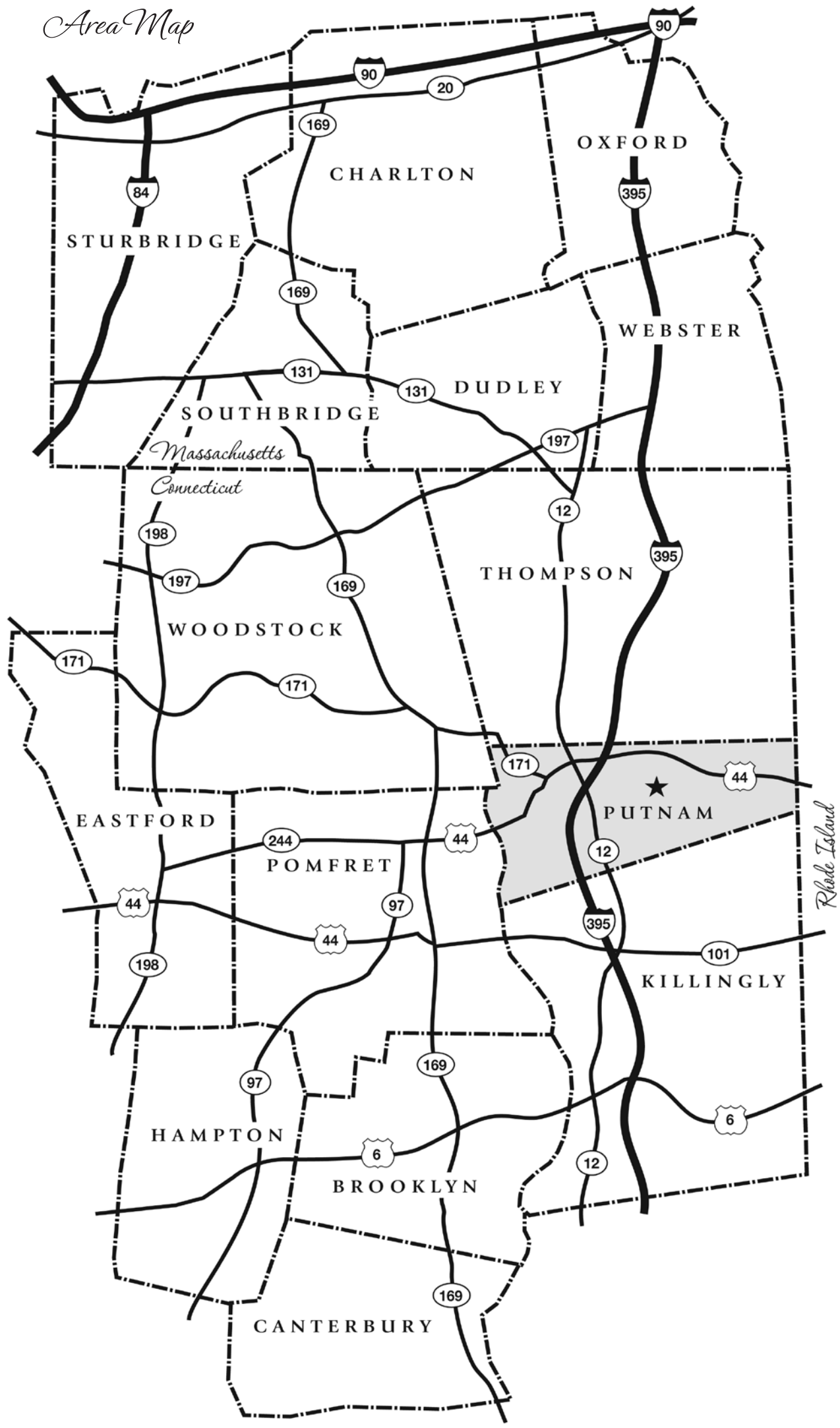
❖ **SATURDAY LUNCH:**
Now that you have worked up an appetite, head back to Putnam for lunch. ***Jessica Tuesdays*** **(www.jessicatuesdays.com)** serves award-winning soups, sandwiches, salads, and pastries. The lobster roll is our personal favorite with a cup of soup for starters. The raspberry iced tea and famous strawberry lemonade are popular in the summertime.

❖ **SATURDAY AFTERNOON:**
Visit local farms & greenhouses, take a tour of area art galleries, visit historic town greens, take a tour of our vineyards, bike along scenic roads, or walk along the Putnam River Trail. Check out the Putnam Traveler Calendar of Events for things to do. For more information about the area visit **www.visitnect.com.**

❖ **SATURDAY EVENING:**
85 Main **(www.85main.com)**, ***Bella's Bistro*** **(www.bellasbistromarket.com)** and ***Someplace Special*** **(www.someplacespecialrestaurant.com)** located in downtown Putnam, each feature patio dining during the summer season. After dinner visit the new ***Stomping Ground*** on Main Street for live entertainment!

❖ **SUNDAY MID MORNING:**
Before heading back home, enjoy breakfast and round of golf at the ***Brooklyn Country Club*** **(www.brooklyngolfcourse.com)**. This is another local hot spot for breakfast, lunch or dinner. The golf course is open to the public and guests can play 9 & 18 holes or simply a round of mini-golf.

Thank you for visiting Northeastern Connecticut.....



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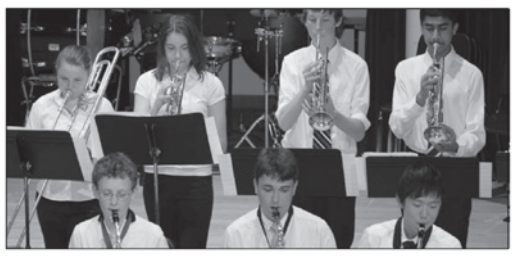

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